

Introduction to Shotcrete's Newest Department

by Tom Norman

If ever there was a perfect application for shotcrete, pool and spa construction would be it. Pool and spa construction is a continuing viable application for shotcrete. As long as they keep building new homes, health clubs, public recreation areas, water parks, zoos, and hotels, there will be pools to go along with them. The industry is strong and the opportunities are there for the American Shotcrete Association (ASA) to connect with its key players—from the CEOs of the largest pool and spa builders in the country to the new hires just getting their feet wet at the bottom of a pool as part of a shotcrete crew.

And so, it is ASA's duty to reach out specifically to the pool and spa industry through all available avenues, including this magazine. The Pool & Spa Corner (this is the first installment) will serve as a voice for designers, company owners, contractors, crew leaders, nozzlemen, and

others with a stake in the pool and spa industry. Future articles will involve these people and focus on their perspectives so that our readers can learn about current issues surrounding the use of shotcrete in the pool and spa industry.

Thomas Adams, ASA Executive Director, has stated that ASA's priority in 2007 is to increase corporate membership in the association (Winter 2007 issue of *Shotcrete*, page 4). Through the efforts of the Pool & Spa Committee and Pool & Spa Corner, we hope to bring more of the thousands of pool and spa builders into the ASA fold as corporate members. The benefits of ASA membership include strengthening and growing the market for our services, networking opportunities among fellow members, becoming involved in ASA's Nozzleman Training Program and ACI's Nozzleman Certification Program, and other promotional opportunities.

Possible topics for the Pool & Spa Corner are numerous, such as nozzleman certification, surface preparation, choosing equipment, proper hose handling and shooting technique, choice of nozzles, finishing tools, use of trimmings, weather concerns, the contractor/subcontractor relationship, choice of wet- or dry-mix processes, material batching choices, successful jobs, strength requirements, safety, language barriers in the industry, and new custom shapes for pools and spas...to name just a few.

The Pool & Spa Corner will provide a place for those in the industry to read about their peers and to learn about new developments in construction techniques, equipment, or tools. But it will also promote shotcrete to the industry. Shotcrete is the choice of pool and spa builders for two major reasons: pools built using the shotcrete method can be virtually any size or shape because the shotcrete material forms to any excavated or formed surface, and shotcrete pools, when properly constructed, are extremely strong and durable. These points cannot be emphasized enough if we are to make inroads with startup companies or others on the verge of becoming involved in the pool and spa construction who are looking for direction.



Precision Gunitite Corp. nozzleman shooting a pool in Coachella, CA

Pool & Spa Corner

This section of the magazine should educate as well as entertain. So, even humorous pool and spa anecdotes may find their way into these pages from time to time. Say, did you hear the one about the pool contractor who ran out of hose...nevermind.

All joking aside, ASA is actively reaching out to those established shotcreters in the pool and spa business to help keep the industry alive and growing. We need your input for Pool & Spa Corner. We want to hear the challenges you face, the breakthroughs you have made, your concerns for the future, and your advice for those just getting a start in the industry.

Any readers who are interested in contributing to Pool & Spa Corner are encouraged to contact me at (513) 321-2950 or tnorman@airplaco.com.



Tom Norman is a Product Manager for Airplaco Equipment Company and Gunitite Supply & Equipment, two divisions of Mesa Industries. For over a decade, he has represented the company's Northeastern region based in Cincinnati, OH. Airplaco and Gunitite's shotcrete equipment, including dry-mix gunitite machines, batch plants, and shotcrete pumps, is manufactured at this Northeast location and also distributed through Houston, TX, and Monrovia, CA, sales locations. Norman is involved in product development for Airplaco's line of shotcrete equipment, which has been produced since 1946. He served 6 years in the U.S. Army and earned an associate degree in business from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI. In addition to being a member of ASA and Chair of ASA's Pool and Spa Committee, Norman is a member of the International Concrete Repair Institute (ICRI) and the Association of Pool and Spa Professionals (APSP).